

General Questions

Is there a cost to become certified?

There is no cost for certification in Virginia.

What is the definition of “Minority-owned Business”?

As defined in § 2.2-1604 of the Code of Virginia, “Minority-owned business” means a business that is at least 51 percent owned by one or more minority individuals who are U.S. citizens or legal resident aliens, or in the case of a corporation, partnership, or limited liability company or other entity, at least 51 percent of the equity ownership interest in the corporation, partnership, or limited liability company or other entity is owned by one or more minority individuals who are U.S. citizens or legal resident aliens, and both the management and daily business operations are controlled by one or more minority individuals, or any historically black college or university, regardless of the percentage ownership by minority individuals or, in the case of a corporation, partnership, or limited liability company or other entity, the equity ownership interest in the corporation, partnership, or limited liability company or other entity.

What is the definition of Minority Individual?

“Minority individual” means an individual who is a citizen of the United States or legal resident alien and who satisfies one or more of the following definitions:

1. “African American” means a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Africa and who is regarded as such by the community of which this person claims to be a part.
2. “Asian American” means a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands, including but not limited to Japan, China, Vietnam, Samoa, Laos, Cambodia, Taiwan, Northern Mariana, the Philippines, a U.S. territory of the Pacific, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, or Sri Lanka and who is regarded as such by the community of which this person claims to be a part.
3. “Hispanic American” means a person having origins in any of the Spanish-speaking peoples of Mexico, South or Central America, or the Caribbean Islands or other Spanish or Portuguese cultures and who is regarded as such by the community of which this person claims to be a part.
4. “Native American” means a person having origins in any of the original peoples of North America and who is regarded as such by the community of which this person claims to be a part or who is recognized by a tribal organization.

What is the definition of a Small Business?

“Small business” means a business that is at least 51% independently owned and controlled by one or more individuals who are U.S. citizens or legal resident aliens, and together with affiliates, has 250 or fewer employees, or average annual gross receipts of \$10 million or less averaged over the previous three

years. One or more of these individual owners shall control both the management and daily business operations of the small business.

What is the definition of a Women-Owned Business?

“Women-owned business” means a business that is at least 51% owned by one or more women who are U.S. citizens or legal resident aliens, or in the case of a corporation, partnership, or limited liability company or other entity, at least 51% of the equity ownership interest is owned by one or more women who are citizens of the United States or legal resident aliens, and both the management and daily business operations are controlled by one or more women.

Can I be certified as “Service Disabled” or a “Veteran”?

Veterans who are small business owners can obtain Service Disabled Veteran-owned “status” in the SWaM vendor database. This is not a separate certification; it is a designation of those businesses that are owned by Service Disabled Veterans who are certified as such by the Virginia Department of Veteran Services. Veterans wishing to apply for service disabled veteran status must first seek eligibility certification from the Department of Veteran Services by calling (804) 786-0286 or visiting the DVS website at <http://www.dvs.virginia.gov>. Veterans can apply for small, women-owned or minority-owned certification with the Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity before or after obtaining an eligibility certificate from DVS. Both services are available at no charge.

Should I apply for SWaM or DBE Certification? What’s the difference?

The SWaM Procurement Initiative is a Commonwealth of Virginia program, while the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (“DBE”) Program is a federal certification program under the U.S. Department of Transportation. The DBE Program focuses on Federally-funded projects through the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), and also includes rail, airport and seaport projects, as well as public transit projects. See below for more information on the DBE Program.

What is a DUNS number and how do I get one?

The Dun & Bradstreet or “DUNS” Number is a unique nine-digit identification sequence, which provides unique identifiers of single business entities, while linking corporate family structures together. It is recognized, recommended and/or required by more than 50 global, industry and trade associations, including the United Nations, the U.S. Federal Government, the Australian Government and the European Commission. In today’s global economy, the D&B DUNS Number has become the standard for keeping track of the world’s businesses. To get a DUNS Number, call 1-866-705-5711 and request for a DUNS number for doing business with federal and state government. There is no charge for the number. You can also go to the Dun & Bradstreet website at <http://www.dnb.com/get-a-duns-number.html>.

How do I prove that I'm certified as a SWaM business?

Once your certification has been approved, you will receive an electronic approval letter sent to your email address. You can obtain a copy of your listing the SWaM Vendor Director by finding your business listing and printing out that page. You can also present a copy of your electronic approval letter or print a certificate from the certification portal.

What documents should I submit to prove identification and U.S. citizenship?

You must provide:

A DMV License

AND

EITHER: U.S. Passport or Birth Certificate, Permanent Resident Card, or Certificate of Naturalization

Do I need to notarize my SWaM application?

No. The notary requirement was eliminated.

I've completed my application online. When will I receive my certification?

The completion of the online application form is only the first step of your application process. You need to sign and date the completed application affidavit and debarment form, upload all required supporting documents, and submit the application online or your application will not be processed.

What happens after I submit my SWaM certification application?

Once the signed application form and the completed supporting documents are received by our office, it takes approximately 60 business days for the assigned certification officer to review your file. Information about the status of your application, the date of your application, all documents that were received or missing, and any other necessary information being requested can be viewed by entering a certification tracking number or a portion of the company's name at this page:

<https://directory.sbsd.virginia.gov/#!/status-search>

Why must I provide a copy of my business' Income Tax Return?

The income tax return is used to verify that your business qualifies for SWaM certification in its size and its organization. Any proprietary information and all financial records are confidential and excluded from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, Code of Virginia, and Section 2.2-3705.6 (20). In order for financial records to be excluded from disclosure under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, the business must (1) invoke such exclusion upon submission of the data or other materials for which

protection from disclosure is sought, (2) identify the data or other materials from which protection is sought, and (3) state the reasons why protection is necessary.

I've submitted my required supporting documents, now what?

The required supporting documents will then be reviewed by a SWaM Certification Officer for compliance with the eligibility criteria found in the Code of Virginia, Section 2.2-1604, and the Virginia Administrative Code, 7 VAC13-20-10 et seq.

How else can I prove my ownership and control of the business?

You may be asked to provide or may want to further establish your ownership and control of the business by providing any of the following documents:

Signed agreements or contracts (e.g., rental agreements, leases, work contracts, or other types of formal written agreements concerning the business)

Contract or work history of your business (e.g., client list, past project list)

Resume(s) of all owners, shareholders, partnerships, officers, and/or managers

Bank signature card, corporate banking resolution, or notarized letter from bank indicating signatory authorization

How long am I certified?

If your supporting documentation proves your status as a Small, Women- or Minority-owned Business, your certification will be granted for a five (5) year term. At least 30-60 days prior to the expiration of your certification, you must re-certify to maintain your SWaM status.

How will a state procurement officer or buyer find my business?

Once approved as a SWaM vendor, your business will be listed in the SWaM Vendor Directory. This directory is a listing of all certified small, women and minority-owned firms currently on file with SBSD, along with a description of the products/services they provide. The SWaM Vendor Directory is posted on our website at www.sbsd.virginia.gov and accessed by procurement agents of state agencies, as well as other public entities and private corporations, when searching for a SWaM vendor.

What else can I do to promote my business?

If you have not already done so, we strongly recommend that you register your company with eVA , the state's online, electronic procurement system. For more information about eVA and getting registered, visit the Vendor Resource Center on the eVA website at <https://www.eva.virginia.gov>.

Does certification guarantee that I will receive a state contract?

No, obtaining SWaM certification does not serve as a guarantee of work or that you'll receive a contract. The Program provides the tools for your business to effectively compete and remove any barriers or limitations in the state procurement process for small, women- and minority-owned businesses. You will still need to aggressively market your business, network, and competitively bid for projects or contracts.

I am from one of the 12 states listed on the SBSD website that are unable to participate in the Virginia SWaM Program. Why can't I participate?

The following 12 states and district do not allow Virginia-based businesses to participate equally in their programs for small, women- or minority-owned businesses: Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Florida, Iowa, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, New Mexico, Ohio, Texas, and Washington, D. C.. Businesses based in these 12 states are not eligible to participate because the Code of Virginia Section 2.2-1606 (8) requires that SBSD deny them participation as a result of their programs or procurement preferences which negatively affect Virginia-based businesses (such as denying them certification or having non-Virginia, in-state preferences or pre-conditions for participation).

Are Non-profits eligible for SWaM Certification?

Non-profits are not eligible for SWaM certification with the exception of Employment Services Organizations (ESO).

Federal DBE Program Questions

Should I apply for SWaM first, and then the DBE Program?

Not necessarily, and you need not choose one or the other. You are able to apply for both DBE and SWaM simultaneously. If you intend to apply for DBE Certification, apply for both DBE and SWaM at the same time. Although it is more demanding, by applying for both programs through SBSD simultaneously, you will only need to apply once, you will get both certifications if you are successful, and it will result in less duplicative paperwork. However, if you are pursuing an opportunity that includes a small business set-aside or a micro business set-aside, it may be more beneficial to apply for SWaM first. The processing timelines for each program are similar, however, the additional steps in the DBE certification process usually results in the overall timeline being longer for DBE.

I'm already a certified DBE. Should I apply for SWaM?

If it makes sense for your business development and marketing goals, then yes. For example, if you are pursuing an opportunity that includes a small business set-aside or a micro business set-aside, then you must be certified as a SWaM small business and/or a SWaM micro business and should therefore pursue SWaM certification.

What are the current requirements for notarization of documents?

The Affidavit of Certification, the Affidavit of No Change, and the Personal Net Worth Statement all need to be notarized. Notarization must include date, city/county and state in which notarization was performed. It must also include the notary registration number of the notary public, and the date of expiry of his/her commission. The notary certificate must be on the same page as the signature it is witnessing, and the DBE applicant signing the document must be physically present with the notary and sign in his/her presence. The notary must be certain of the Applicant's true identity. The seal should be sharp, legible, permanent, and photographically reproducible. For further information, [click here](#).

How do I apply for DBE Certification?

On this website, go to the DBE Certification page. Download the Uniform Certification Application form and the Personal Net Worth Statement form. If you are an out of state firm applying via the Interstate Process, then download the Interstate Certification Affidavit form. Complete the forms. Get the Application and the Personal Net Worth Statement notarized and upload them in the online Application Portal with the supporting documentation listed on the Checklist at the back of the Application Form and Submit your application online.

What are the current requirements for notarization of documents?

The Affidavit of Certification, the Affidavit of No Change, and the Personal Network Statement all need to be notarized. Notarization must include date, city/county and state in which notarization was performed. It must also include the notary registration number of the notary public, and the date of expiry of his/her commission. The notary certificate must be on the same page as the signature it is witnessing,

and the DBE applicant signing the document must be physically present with the notary and sign in his/her presence. The notary must be certain of the Applicant's true identity. The seal should be sharp, legible, permanent, and photographically reproducible. For further information:

<https://www.commonwealth.virginia.gov/official-documents/notary-commissions/>

Where can I get the DBE application forms?

They are on this website on the DBE certification page, as well as the Important Forms page.

I'm SDB / 8(a) certified. Do I need to complete the DBE Application Form as well?

You are required to fill out the UCP application form and submit it with required documents to SBSD. Currently there is no MOU between USDOT and SBA to allow us to modify the DBE application process.

I'm DBE certified in my Home State. Do I need to complete a new application for Virginia?

Only if you are opting out of the Interstate Process.

If the firm is already DBE-certified in its home state, it does not complete the DBE application (UCA) again IF it is applying via the Interstate Process. If applying via the Interstate process, then in addition to the copy of all documents that were sent to its home state, the firm would need to submit the Interstate Affidavit, the form of which (located on the DBE page of our website) also lists what documents have to be submitted with the Interstate Application Packet. If a firm chooses to opt-out of the Interstate Process, whether because it cannot obtain a complete copy of its home state application file, or for some other reason, it must submit a letter that is signed and dated by the owner and stating that the firm is opting out of the Interstate Process. In this case, the letter should still be uploaded to the space for the DBE Interstate Certification Affidavit, and its application will be processed as if it were an in-state new applicant (including completing a new application for Virginia), with the exception that a copy of the onsite report will be obtained from its home state.

Why do I need to send all these supporting documents?

We have to ascertain not only who owns the company, but also who controls it on a daily basis. Additionally, we have to check Personal Networth and Company size, in order to comply with the Federal Regulations. If we are challenged on our certification, whether by Federal auditors or a competitor company, we need the documentation on file to support our decisions. Personal financial information is confidential to the DBE Program and may not be disclosed otherwise by us, even in response to a Freedom of Information request.

What is the purpose of an Onsite Visit?

The main purpose is to confirm what was written in the application and supporting documentation. It gives us a chance to see the business facilities, understand the daily management processes, and answer any remaining questions we have about a company's eligibility. It gives the company owners the chance to talk face to face with someone who knows about the DBE Program and can answer questions or give other contact information.

How long does the DBE application process take?

It is likely to take 90 days after we receive all the information and documentation. That includes the time for reviewing the file, making an Onsite Visit and for you to work through the Orientation materials. Most delays are caused by incomplete information or missing documentation.

What business and technical assistance is available to DBE Companies?

We publish a monthly VSBSD Opportunities Bulletin. VDOT also has a webpage for Business Opportunities. We have Regional Field Officers in our Service Division. They can help with marketing assistance, assistance with resolving business related issues, assessments to determine the strength and weaknesses of firms, preparation of bonding and loan applications, bid opportunity referrals, and help in the preparation of VDOT applications (prequalification and certification). They can also give assistance with technical construction related problems, in reviewing and analyzing highway projects and monitoring pre and post bid activities, and individualized and group training sessions (estimating, bidding, plan reading, and financial statements and marketing).

Other Questions

What is eVA?

eVA is Virginia's online, electronic procurement system. eVA is used by more than 13,000 state agency and local government buyers to announce bidding opportunities, get quotes and place orders for goods and services. By registering with eVA, you'll become part of a community of more than 45,000 businesses offering quality goods and services to the Commonwealth. Learn more about eVA at <https://eva.virginia.gov>.

What is Ariba?

The Ariba system is part of eVA and used to send orders electronically. If you select Electronic as your preferred Order Method when registering with eVA, you will be asked to create an ARIBA account. By registering with Ariba you'll also gain access to Ariba's vast network of both public and private buying communities, to whom you may also market your goods and services. For more information about registering with eVA and Ariba, visit <https://eva.virginia.gov/pages/eva-registration-buyer-vendor.htm>.

My business is not based in Virginia. Can I still become certified?

Businesses that are not incorporated or based in Virginia (called “foreign” entities) are not eligible to participate in the Virginia SWaM Procurement Initiative if their home state denies certification to Virginia-based SWaM businesses or provide preferences for small, women- or minority-owned businesses based in that state that is not available to Virginia-based businesses. Otherwise, non-Virginia businesses must satisfy the eligibility criteria of the SWaM Program and are required to register with the State Corporation Commission. For your specific business type, you should register or obtain the following:

Corporations: Certificate of Authority to Transact Business in Virginia

Limited Liability Companies: Certificate of Registration of a Foreign Limited Liability Company

Limited Partnerships: Statement of Registration of a Foreign Limited Partnership

Partnerships: Statement of Foreign Partnership Authority

Limited Liability Partnerships: Statement of Registration as a Foreign Limited Liability Partnership

Do I have to send the original documents?

No. Do not send your original documents, all documents should be uploaded to the certification portal.

Is there someone that I can speak to directly or in my area?

The Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity has satellite offices across the state staffed with individuals trained in providing assistance to individuals interested in doing business with the Commonwealth. The Business Development and Outreach Services team can help you and their information can be found in the Staff Directory.

What's my status?

Information about the status of your application, the date of your application, all documents that were received or missing, and any other necessary information being requested can be viewed by entering a certification tracking number or a portion of the company's name at this page:

<https://directory.sbsd.virginia.gov/#!/status-search>

If your supporting documentation proves your status as a Small, Women- or Minority-owned Business, your certification will be granted for a five (5) year term. At least 30-60 days prior to the expiration of your certification, you must re-certify to maintain your SWaM status.

You may also contact The Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity Customer Support for assistance at:

The Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity
101 North 14th St.
11th Floor
Richmond, VA 23219

sbsd@sbsd.virginia.gov
804-786-6585
866-248-8814

What does do I need to submit for my DBE annual?

Once you are certified as a DBE/ACDBE, you are required to submit, annually, documents to our office prior to your anniversary date. For the specific steps and forms for the annual submission requirement for currently approved DBE/ACDBEs, please go to the page here:

<https://www.sbsd.virginia.gov/certification-division/dbe/dbe-annual-submission-requirement/>

I need help applying. How can I get help?

You may contact The Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity Customer Support for assistance at:

The Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity
101 North 14th St.
11th Floor
Richmond, VA 23219
sbsd@sbsd.virginia.gov
804-786-6585
866-248-8814

Can my application be expedited?

The standard processing time for SWaM certification is approximately 60 business days. Although we make every effort to process applications as quickly as possible, they are still processed in the order in which they are received (First In First Out). A certification officer should be reviewing your application before that time frame expires. The assigned certification officer will provide feedback via email should they have any questions or require any further documentation.

How do I apply for SWaM?

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1QFiw5srISy3Lqzd8fzhBFiYQxreepSBGF9Ro_yYRYLU/edit#heading=h.44sinio

How do I recertify for SWaM?

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1QFiw5srISy3Lqzd8fzhBFiYQxreepSBGF9Ro_yYRYLU/edit#heading=h.2jxsxqh

How do I apply for DBE/ACDBE?

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1QFiw5srISy3Lqzd8fzhBFiYQxreepSBGF9Ro_yYRYLU/edit#heading=h.1ci93xb

How do I submit my DBE/ACDBE annual submission?

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1QFiw5srISy3Lqzd8fzhBFiYQxreepSBGF9Ro_yYRYLU/edit#heading=h.3whwml4

How do I register in the Portal?

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1QFiw5srISy3Lqzd8fzhBFiYQxreepSBGF9Ro_yYRYLU/edit#heading=h.1fob9te

How do I request new NAICS codes/make changes to my NAICS codes?

If a firm is requesting additional NAICS codes/making changes to their NAICS codes, they must follow the directions and submit the DBE Notice of Change Form, found on our website at

<https://sbsd.virginia.gov/certification-division/dbe/dbe-change/>

The DBE Notice of Change form should be combined into a single .pdf, along with any other relevant documents that support the request and uploaded to Notice of Change on the DBE Upload page. Firms should follow the directions below to get to the DBE's Upload Documents screen in order to upload the completed DBE Notice of Change form:

1. To view your application, click on the link below, or copy and paste it into your browser. You will be asked for your username and password to gain access to your application portal

<https://certification-app.sbsd.virginia.gov>

2. You will need to click on your application in your Application Queue, then click the Edit, the Submit DBE Annual Documents, or the Submit DBE Annual Documents/Recertify SWaM button, if necessary

3. Click the Next button on the Application information screen

4. This will take you back to the DBE's Upload Documents screen to upload your documents

5. After uploading all documents that you intend to submit, click the Resubmit button at the bottom right of the screen to submit your document(s) to us

IMPORTANT: We do not receive your submission unless and until you click the Resubmit button.

How do I make updates to my DBE certification (control, ownership, etc.) information?

Once you are certified as a DBE/ACDBE, you must inform us in writing of any change in circumstances affecting the firm's ability to meet size, disadvantaged status, ownership, or control requirements of the DBE/ACDBE program or any material change in the information provided in your application form. If you are requesting to change your NAICS codes (whether requesting additional NAICS code(s), requesting to have NAICS code(s) removed, or requesting changes to NAICS code(s) you already have), or adding ACDBE (if already DBE certified), or adding DBE (if already ACDBE certified), then this also qualifies as a material change.

If there have been changes, such as to the firm's physical address, mailing address, phone number, email, etc., then this is NOT a material change, and considered a minor change.

Whether a material change or a minor change, you must provide written notification within 30 days of the occurrence of the change.

For the specific steps and forms for the Notification of Change requirement for currently approved DBE/ACDBEs -OR- for non-material changes (such as contact information), please go to the page here: <https://www.sbsd.virginia.gov/certification-division/dbe/dbe-change/>

How do I request an update as a SWaM firm?

Request an Additional SWaM Type or Make Changes to Your Application:

If you have applied for certification or recertification via the new Application Portal, and have therefore uploaded all of the Required Documents to the new system:

Then you may request new SWaM Types or Make Changes to your application by editing your application:

1. Click the edit icon (pencil) on the green side of your business' application in your Application Queue
2. Select all of the Certification Types that you are applying for, or make changes to the application information and click Save
3. Enter an update reason in the box that pops up (i.e., apply for additional SWaM Type, change contact information, change ownership information, etc.), Submit, then the Next button
4. If any documents are needed on the Required Documents Upload page based on your change, upload each of the required documents and click Next
5. Click Submit or Resubmit on the SWaM Affidavit page

How do I get a copy of my DBE file?

Request for DBE/ACDBE file by Business Owner

Please note:

1. The majority business owner -OR- if there is no owner with at least a majority ownership percentage, the owner who is ALSO the highest officer, must sign the second page of this request for copies of your DBE/ACDBE application and documents. Any other owner(s) whose information is included in the DBE file must sign the release on the third page in order for their documentation to be included in the file copy. It is against the Federal Regulations for us to release information that may be reasonably construed as confidential business information to any third party without the written consent of the firm that submitted the information. This includes applications for DBE/ACDBE certification and supporting documentation.

2. The costs for copies of DBE/ACDBE files are as follows:

1. 10 cent per sheet of the application form and supporting documents

2. \$30.00: processing fee

3. \$30.00: mailing cost

Please contact the firm's DBE Certification Officer for an estimate of the total pages of the requested documents. A copy of the emailed estimate from the DBE Certification Officer must be included with this form. Payment is required in advance by check and checks are to be made out to the Treasurer of Virginia. We expect a five (5) business day turn around for shipping of the file.

Please mail the completed form and check to:

Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity

101 N. 14th Street, 11th Floor

Richmond, VA 23219

How do I change which user account my certification application is linked to?

The Contact Information Change Request Form, can be found under at the top of the Important forms page, on the SWaM certification page at the bottom of the page, and on the DBE page under the Current DBE/ACDBE Notification of Change Requirement tab. The form should be used instead of sending a firm a SWaM notice of change/ DBE Notice of change to update or remove contact information, linking/unlinking accounts. SWaM notice of change/ DBE Notice of change should only be used for material changes (i.e., ownership, control, company name, etc.). The form needs to be completed by an owner or currently listed contact, or the form is invalid and will not be processed.

<https://forms.office.com/g/LPAbLrrg2r>

How do I grant an additional person access to edit my firm's application?

The Contact Information Change Request Form, can be found under at the top of the Important forms page, on the SWaM certification page at the bottom of the page, and on the DBE page under the Current DBE/ACDBE Notification of Change Requirement tab. The form should be used instead of sending a firm a SWaM notice of change/ DBE Notice of change to update or remove contact information, linking/unlinking accounts. SWaM notice of change/ DBE Notice of change should only be used for material changes (i.e., ownership, control, company name, etc.). The form needs to be completed by an owner or currently listed contact, or the form is invalid and will not be processed.

<https://forms.office.com/g/LPAbLrrg2r>

How do I withdraw from the DBE/ACDBE program?

For the specific steps and forms to withdraw from the DBE/ACDBE program in Virginia, please go to the page here: <https://www.sbsd.virginia.gov/certification-division/dbe/dbe-withdrawal/>

How do I withdraw from the SWaM program?

Firms can submit to request withdraw from the SWaM program by submitting a signed letter from the majority owner (on file) to their certification officer or upload the request to the certification portal under Misc. documents labeled as such.

How do I request a copy of a DBE onsite if I am part of another state's Uniform Certification Program (UCP)?

Email your request to whitney.booker@sbsd.virginia.gov and CC the request to shyteia.carter@sbsd.virginia.gov